

Poem to Bukowski

I can't write about rats and cock-  
roaches friend cause we exterminated  
them and the only ones I see around here  
are two-legged ones with no tails.  
Booze gives me arthritis and my money goes to  
the dentist car insurance groceries plumber  
doctor taxes phone gas water lights so there's  
not much left for playing the horses  
and as for whores who steal your manuscripts  
that's one problem I don't have.

My life laughs sometimes too  
and I guess that's bad for a poet  
but maybe it's only because I'm irish  
and the fairies tickle my ribs. Maybe  
your trouble is being a pole since being married  
to one I know how hard it is  
for them to laugh unless they're boozed and then it's hard  
to tell the laughing from the crying  
and you keep hoping they'll go to sleep  
because your irish tells you  
the sun will be shining when they wake up  
and you'd rather hear them snoring  
than cry-laughing because you know  
they are hurting  
and you can't help.

But look at me.  
I started out to write a poem to you  
and wrote about me instead.  
What I want to know is how come  
an irish Clairol redhead female with four kids  
a beautiful blond husband  
and a polish grandfather  
likes your old man dead in a room poems?  
If you think I'm going to wear  
black to your funeral  
you're crazy.  
I'm going to wear the rainbow color  
of your poems.  
Only don't die yet friend.  
Don't die yet.

-- Claudia Winski

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